



# Washington Produce Rail Car Pool

 Washington State  
Department of Transportation

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**For More Information:**  
WSDOT State Rail and Marine Office  
360-705-7900  
[www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/rail)

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The Washington Produce Rail Car Pool project is a program created to assist the agricultural community by providing refrigerated rail cars that carry Washington grown produce to east coast states.

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## What is the Washington Produce Rail Car Pool Program?

The Washington Produce Rail Car Pool Program was created in 2003 by the state legislature. It carries Washington State produce to eastern states in refrigerated rail cars. Twenty-five cars are currently active in the pool.

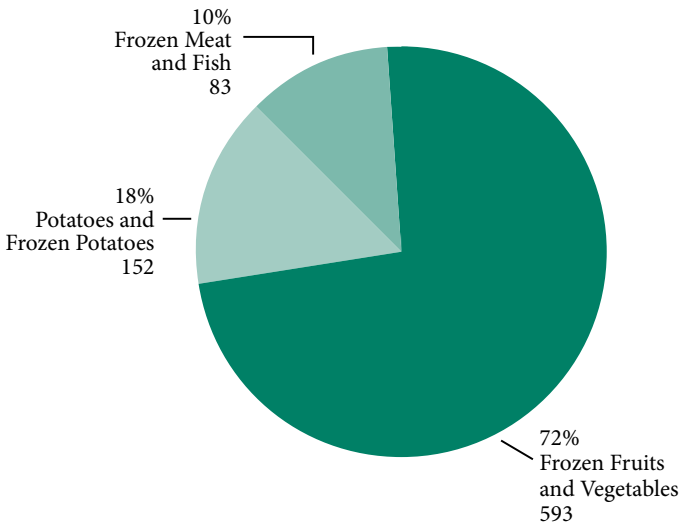
The Produce Rail Car Pool Program began service in August 2006. Since the start of the program, 828 refrigerated rail car shipments have been made.

## What types of products do the railcars carry?

Seventy two percent of shipments made have been frozen fruit and vegetables. Eighteen percent were fresh and frozen potatoes. Frozen meat and seafood account for 10 percent of the shipments.

### Produce Rail Car Shipment by Product

August 2006 to December 2010



## Washington Produce Rail Car Pool Program

The pool is designed to assist the agricultural community by:

- Opening new markets for Washington State produce;
- Serving Washington shippers by relieving a shortage of long-haul trucks, and;
- Serving taxpayers by reducing wear and tear on highways caused by heavy trucks.

## Why do Washington growers and shippers need this service?

Washington's produce business suffers from transportation issues not faced by other states. Not only must Washington's fruit and produce travel one of the longest paths to reach midwest and east coast markets, but economic factors deter refrigerated trucks from coming to the state. The result is that Washington's shippers face high transport costs and a chronic lack of refrigerated railcars to transport produce to east coast and midwest markets.

## How does Washington State benefit?

The project helps rural economies in Washington State by ensuring that produce farmers will be able to generate steady income from their crops.

## How do taxpayers benefit?

At full capacity, the Produce Rail Car program would eliminate hundreds of heavy truckloads per year from Washington State highways. This would reduce highway maintenance expenses and congestion and improve safety.

Studies reveal that rail transportation is three times more fuel-efficient than truck transportation for hauling freight. Consequently, less fossil fuel will be consumed and air quality will improve by diverting these long-haul produce shipments off the highways and onto railroads. Each 57-foot refrigerated railcar holds just over two truck loads of fruit and nearly three truckloads for onions and potatoes.

## How does the program work?

WSDOT contracted with Rail Logistics, LC, to provide 25 refrigerated rail cars and provide management, marketing, tracking, servicing, cleaning and other services. The State pays Rail Logistics \$12,500 per month to lease the cars, plus \$750 per month to manage the fleet. Shippers contact Rail Logistics directly to reserve a car, and Rail Logistics makes all the arrangements for the shipper.

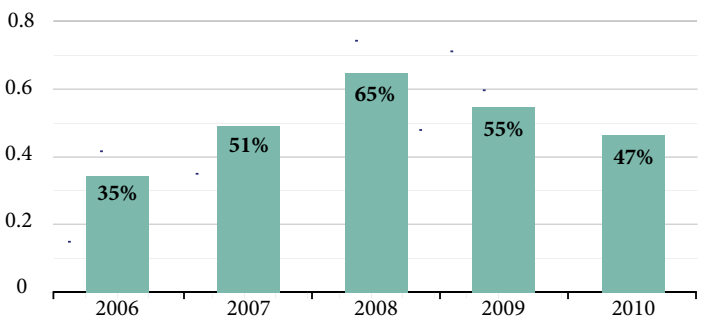
## How is the program funded?

The program is funded with \$2 million in federal grants and \$40,000 in state transportation funds.

## How is the Produce Rail Car Pool performing?

Since it began operation in 2006, the Washington Produce Railcar Pool has been growing modestly. The graph below shows the average monthly utilization rate for each year since August 2006. In 2008, utilization reached its highest level at 65 percent.

### Produce Rail Car Average Utilization Rate



Note: Utilization rate equals monthly carloads shipped vs. monthly cars available.

Frozen raspberries being loaded onto a "Cold Train" bound for a Smucker's processing plant.



A worker inspects a refrigerated rail car.



Washington apples begin unloaded from one of the refrigerated cars.

